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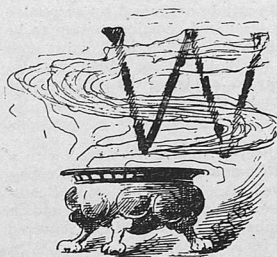
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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

PAINTING ON TEXTILE FABRICS.

BY EMMA HAYWOOD.

CHAPTER II.



I have already discussed the methods of painting on silk and satin in oils or water colors, but before pursuing the subject with regard to other textile fabrics I may

here remark that most lovely effects can be obtained by the use of tapestry dyes on either of these materials, provided the color chosen to work upon be white. To prevent the dyes from spreading, a medium, especially prepared for the purpose, must first be passed over the silk, after it is stretched ready for painting on. When this application is thoroughly dry, paint as directed in my "Technical Hints on Tapestry Painting" in previous numbers of this journal, using with the colors the same medium as for tapestry canvas.

If the preparation first laid on impairs the brightness of the silk, then after the painting is finished and fixed, take it to a good dyer's and you will find that the sheen or satin finish can be easily restored. The only difference in the method of painting will be that as the dyes do not need to be scrubbed in as on the canvas, it will be better to use sable brushes; in this way the most delicate shading of many-hued brilliant birds and butterflies can be easily effected. One great advantage of painting on silk with tapestry dyes is that when soiled the work can be cleaned without fear of injury to the coloring. Tapestry dyes can also be used on white velvet with exquisite results, but the pile of the velvet must first be pressed down with a strong solution of gum arabic, then paint as usual; and in the steaming the gum will be dissolved and carried off, and the pile will resume its former softness. This method applies only to good silk velvet, as on cotton velvet the dyes may not be subjected to the action of steam.

It is possible to paint on cotton velvet or moleskin without any previous preparation, but only broad effects can be gained, and care must be taken to use the color sparingly as you approach the edges of the design. I should not recommend painting on velvet with oils, as the result is never very satisfactory. Water colors are sometimes used, but it is difficult to keep the pile from becoming matted and harsh; spirits of wine used as a medium will prevent the colors from running; the real difficulty consists in the great power of absorption caused by the raised pile of the material.

Beginners should not attempt painting on velvet until from practice they have become expert with their brush on other textiles. For painting on bolting cloth, gauze, or muslin use water colors. Stretch the material in a frame, then place it over the design and carefully outline with a faint pencil line; next take some fresh Chinese white, grind it well on your palette to the consistency of cream, a few drops of water color megilp will help it to work freely, then with a sable brush lay the Chinese white so prepared over every part of the design, unless the flowers be yellow; in this case pale lemon yellow or pale chrome are sufficiently opaque without the use of white as a ground to work on. Be sure to lay the white on evenly, and work it about with the brush as little as possible. Allow this coating to dry, then paint on it lightly in the required tints; float the color on so that it does not disturb the white beneath; if you lose the high lights you can retouch with white paint when the color is dry. Aim at effect rather than detail, as it is worse than useless to attempt high finish in work of this kind.

Painting on transparent materials has a very charming effect for fire screens, because it affords sufficient protection, yet the fire can be seen through it.

While on the subject of thin materials, I may mention that the very thin silks so much used for easel scarfs may be painted in the following manner: Having marked out the design, procure a large sheet of very thick blotting paper; spread this on a drawing board and pin the silk down on it; then with a sable brush and water colors or tapestry dyes, the latter for choice, lay on the color sparingly, press with the thumb or finger when nearing the edges, so that the blotting paper absorbs the superfluous color; beautiful effects can be gained by judiciously blending the colors. A little alcohol will assist to keep them from spreading. Simple subjects and semi-conventional designs are best for this kind of painting. These thin silks are obtainable in most lovely, delicate shades of every tint. It is well to use rather strong coloring, as the painting has a tendency to weaken on account of the absorbing qualities of the blotting paper placed beneath. Bright tinted autumn leaves are especi-

ally suitable, owing to their beautifully graduated and varied colorings.

Satin finished jean is an excellent material for painting d'oyleys on, either in oils, water colors or tapestry dyes, no previous preparation is needed, as the colors do not run on it, provided you use turpentine as a medium for oils, alcohol with water colors and the usual medium with tapestry dyes. A little Chinese white used on the high lights with water colors will give solidity to the work. Painting on plush is even more difficult than painting on velvet, on account of the length of the pile, a close, thick short pile should be selected. Perhaps the best effect can be gained on plush by the aid of lustra colors.

The range of shades obtained from these metallic colors are silver white, three or four shades of gray, purple, lavender, blue, yellows from metal gold passing on to rich orange red, and also several artistic shades of green. Some of the colors are metallic and others opaque, powder colors all are mixed with a medium made from a variety of gums. This medium must be used freely and the colors ground down with it, by means of a palette knife, only a little at a time must be so prepared, as it dries up very quickly. Apply the metallic colors first, they act as a stopping and prevent the opaque colors from sinking in; these are used to strengthen shadows, also to heighten reds. Lay rose tints over gold metallics, white and black as the case requires over green metallics. Work in the colors until your painting is bright and clear, and produce as much depth of tone as possible. Choose bold, single petalled flowers or fruit for this kind of painting: Lilies, large clematis, Virginia creeper, grapes, pomegranate, oranges with foliage are all good; they should be slightly conventionalized, so as to avoid masses and make the design clear and distinct. Use hog hair brushes to clean them, rinse first in turpentine, and afterwards wash with soap and warm water.

Care must be taken not to wet the plush, so that the pile clings together and lies flat, for this has a very inartistic appearance. A hint as to the best method of designing for the different kinds of painting above described may be useful to my readers.

Having chosen your subject, the first point to be considered is the direction and place of the main lines. These must, of course, be governed by the form of the material to be painted on and the purpose to which it is to be applied. Having drawn these main lines to your satisfaction, next fix the position of the flowers or fruit, then clothe the skeleton lines with leaves; you will find they fall into their places easily, provided some artistic sense is brought to bear on the work. Break up the stems by bringing leaves and tendrils over them, otherwise the design will look poor and stiff.

Having accomplished a design to your liking, next study your scheme of color, and above all things avoid crudity. Remember that harmonious coloring is the result of judicious contrasts, and for decorative work it is impossible to adhere slavishly to what you see before you. Let nature, by all means, be the groundwork of your scheme, but in painting a flower on a piece of material your object is not so much to paint that flower from nature as to use it for a suggestion for decorating a piece of silk, satin or velvet, as the case may be, and your method of painting must, therefore, be subservient to that end. For instance, the shades of green used for foliage must be governed by the color of the ground you are painting on. Presumably the flowers have been chosen with a view to pleasing contrast, but even they must be differently treated, according to whether they be placed on a light or dark ground, a certain unity must pervade both design and coloring to obtain harmonious results.

After some practice and experience you will find yourself instinctively following the method that best suits your purpose from a decorative point of view, if you will always bear in mind that to make your subject decorative in the true sense of the word you must occupy a space rather than fill it, Japanese artists are the best exponents of this doctrine.

WERE concave ceilings introduced into parlor, dining and reception rooms, better opportunities for their decoration would be afforded. A concave sky, although the curve is all but imperceptible, is certainly more pleasing than would be a flat sky. With such a ceiling the cove could be dispensed with, and with it angular molded lines, forming border of ceiling, would disappear, giving place to flower, leaf and branch designs reaching upward and outward. To a lofty room such a ceiling would impart increased stateliness. Where the ceiling is structurally flat converging ribbed arches with central pendant or base might be carried out in paper maché. Rooms present so many angles, mantels and furniture contributing a considerable share, in addition to walls, that curvilinear forms are welcome variations. Even deep coffer, polychromatically decorated, are enhanced in beauty by a curved ground, which carries the eye naturally from one side to the other of the ceiling surface, thus causing it to take in the whole.